



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

NEW REQUIREMENTS FOR ENTRANCE AND GRADUATION AT THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

JAMES ROWLAND ANGELL
The University of Chicago

For the past two years the faculty of the University of Chicago has been considering a somewhat radical revision of the curricula leading to its bachelor's degrees. In conjunction with the study of this problem the faculty has also turned its attention to the problem of entrance requirements. These two undertakings, although instigated by interests of divergent character, were at once seen to involve one another in the most intimate fashion. It has come about in consequence of this interconnection of the problems that the faculty has attempted a reconstruction of the entire course of study from the beginning of the high-school course to the completion of the work for the bachelor's degree. Before proceeding to an account of the program in force at the University after October 1, 1911, it may contribute to the intelligibility of the plan if the more central principles be stated; and first as concerns the high-school course.

Heretofore the University has formulated in a somewhat detailed way the precise subjects and the amount of each which it desired its students to present upon entrance. It is not necessary to recount the exact topics which were thus designated. Suffice it to say that the larger part of a student's high-school course was required to fulfil these obligations and that it was extremely difficult for a student to enter the University if he had not reached his decision so to do during the early years of his high-school work. The effect of these requirements upon the schools which attempted to train students for the University of Chicago was often seriously embarrassing. They found themselves on the one hand obliged to supply students with instruction in the particular subjects demanded by the University, and on the other hand they were increasingly subjected to pressure from

the communities about them to furnish larger opportunities for study in the subjects thought to be of a more practical character, especially such as were believed to be of a vocational kind.

From the side of the University the situation has had several drawbacks. It has resulted in the receiving of an abnormally large number of students with conditions of greater or less severity. It has brought to the University students whose training in one or another direction has been markedly inferior, because of the poor instruction which the school has been able to afford in some of the lines demanded by the University for entrance. It has exercised a disturbing influence over the first year of the work of such students in college, owing to their incapacity to carry forward the prescribed courses. This difficulty often extended beyond the first year, but its most serious consequences were generally to be marked at that point. Most unfortunate of all, perhaps, the situation has put the University in the position of interposing obstacles in the attempt of the schools to respond intelligently and sympathetically to the demands of their communities. We need not discuss at this point the wisdom or otherwise of some of these demands. Many of them are unquestionably well founded; and in any case the authorities of the schools find themselves obligated to meet the situation in some positive fashion rather than merely to evade it.

In the light of these considerations and others of a similar kind, the University has decided upon a distinct departure designed to remedy as many of these defects as possible and to secure certain other desirable ends thus far unmentioned. One practical measure which it proposes to put in operation at once should commend itself to the practical judgment of all. For many years the University has admitted students upon certificate from certain approved schools. These schools have been subjected to careful examination by the University school-inspector. New schools will hereafter be admitted to this list of approved institutions upon the recommendation of the inspector. But the retention of a school upon the list will be determined by the records which its students make after coming to the University. To this end it is proposed that at frequent

intervals the principal of each school shall be supplied with a transcript of the records of the students from that school in residence at the University. It will certainly be recognized that a test of this character is the only one at all fair or adequate to determine whether a school is doing the kind of work which will enable its students to pursue their studies in the University with advantage.

In this connection it may be added that the University proposes to inaugurate during the present year a system of visitation to its own classes on the part of the school principals and teachers engaged in giving instruction in the lines which are continued in the University. In other words, whereas it has hitherto been the practice for the University to inspect the schools, it is now proposed that the schools shall inspect the University. It need not be added that the fundamental purpose of such inspection is the securing of a more intelligent appreciation on the part of both the University teachers and the high-school teachers of the work which each is doing and of the obligations which may reasonably be imposed upon them. This plan is looked forward to with great hopefulness as a means of correction for many forms of misapprehension into which both school and college teachers fall regarding the conduct of the work in their own subjects.

The educational program to which the University has committed itself in the matter of the high-school course involves primarily the desire to co-operate with the schools in the most effective possible way, to release them from all arbitrary obligations to the college, and to assist them in their efforts to accommodate themselves to the new demands made by their constituencies. At the same time it is the strong conviction of the faculty of the University that within the so-called "academic" or regular subjects of the school curriculum is to be found the solid foundation upon which the best and strongest educational edifice is still to be built. It will be seen that this opinion is embodied in the requirements adopted. It has also been the intention to frame such requirements as will enable a serious-minded student, despite irregularities in his earlier training, to

decide at a relatively late point in his school course to come to college. On the other hand, it is strictly provided that each student shall bring to the University a sufficient *quantity* of thorough training to enable the University to begin its work without handicap. To this end it intends hereafter to admit no students with conditions. This provision, together with the severe system of elimination of unsatisfactory students during the first two years of the college course, affords adequate safeguard against any possibility that the quality of the University's degrees may suffer.

With these considerations in mind, we may next pass to a statement of the requirements themselves. A transcript from the action of the faculty will give this material in the briefest form.

Students applying for entrance to the University of Chicago present by certificate from approved schools or by examination 15 units of entrance credits. Among these must be 3 units of English and in addition 1 principal group of 3 or more units, and at least 1 secondary group of 2 or more units. These additional groups may be selected from among the following subjects:

1. Ancient Languages (Greek and Latin), it being understood that to make a group of 2 or of 3 units the work must be offered in a single language.

2. Modern Languages other than English; to make a group of 2 or of 3 units the work must be offered in a single language as under group 1.

3. Ancient History, Mediaeval and Modern History, English History, United States History, Civics, Economics.

4. Mathematics.

5. Physics, Chemistry, Botany, Zoölogy, General Biology, Physiology, Physiography, General Astronomy.

In group 5 not less than 1 unit may be offered in either Physics or Chemistry. Any combination of the subjects within each group is permitted.

Of the 15 units offered for entrance at least 7 must be selected from the subjects in groups 1 to 5. Not less than $\frac{1}{2}$ unit may be offered in any subject.

The remaining 5 units may be selected from any subjects for which credit toward graduation is given by the approved school from which the student receives his diploma; but Greek, Latin, French, German [or any language other than English], Mathematics, Physics, and Chemistry, if offered, but not as above under 1 and 5, must each consist of at least 1 unit. Latin may not be *continued in college* unless at least 2 units be offered.

SUMMARY OF ENTRANCE REQUIREMENTS

- 3 units of English.
- 3 or more units in a single group, 1-5.
- 2 or more units in another single group, 1-5.
- 2 units in subjects selected from any of the groups 1-5.
- [Total 10 units in English and groups 1-5.]
- 5 units selected from any subjects accepted by an approved school for its diploma.
- Not less than $\frac{1}{2}$ unit will be accepted in any subject.
- Entrance with conditions not permitted.

It will be seen upon examination of these requirements that English is the only subject definitely required of all candidates for entrance to the University. The reason for this specification is so obvious as to require no justification. Apart from this, the two most essential demands are, first, the presentation of two groups of subjects, of which at least three units shall be offered in one and at least two units in the other, and, second, the requirement that at least ten of the fifteen units offered shall be in the familiar academic subjects. These two stipulations are designed to bring the student to the University with a reasonable training in at least two lines of work other than English which have already established themselves in the confidence of the intelligent public and which the University is prepared to build upon with courses of its own. They are also intended to obligate the student to pursue at least two-thirds of his school work within the older and better established lines, although within these lines he has great latitude. On the other hand, five units of the student's preparation may be determined entirely by the authorities of the school, provided only that the subjects which are included in these five units be such as the school accepts for its own four-year diploma.

It will be noticed that the school is left the widest possible freedom, aside from the requirement in English, to build up curricula involving the older academic subjects in such ways as it may see fit, and that to the extent of five units it is given a perfectly free hand to introduce the newer and so-called vocational subjects, which are playing so important a part in the development of the modern high school.

Before entering upon the details of the college requirements a few words may be devoted to the educational principles involved. The University of Chicago has for many years recognized the work of the first two years as constituting a unit somewhat sharply marked off from the work of the last two years. It has recognized this distinction by conferring a certificate and a title upon the successful completion of the first two years of work, known as the curricula of the Junior Colleges. It is therefore introducing no novelty into its procedure when it recognizes in its new program a sharp division between the upper and the lower halves of the undergraduate work. It is intended that the work of the first college year shall connect directly with the work in the high school in order that there may be as little break as possible between the two. It is furthermore desired to provide that before the completion of the second year of the college course the student shall have secured a reasonable mastery over the written and the spoken forms of his mother tongue. It is also intended that before this point is reached he shall be in possession of a practical reading-knowledge of some modern language other than English. Finally, it is laid down that prior to this he shall have pursued studies to the extent of at least four full courses (each the equivalent of a half unit measured in terms of the preparatory course) in each of the following four great divisions of the field of knowledge: (1) philosophy, history, and social science, (2) modern languages other than English, (3) mathematics, (4) natural science. The obvious purpose of this last requirement is that no student may pass into the more specialized work of the Senior Colleges, the final two years of the undergraduate course, without some acquaintance with the materials and methods peculiar to each of these great realms of learning.

In order to procure these several results, the student is required to carry three courses during the three terms of his Freshman year which continue work that he has pursued to the extent of two or more units in the high school, or which he has followed to the extent of one unit during his final year in the school. There is nothing to prevent his choosing all the subjects

of his Freshman work in such a way as to continue studies begun in high school, but he is compelled to follow at least one to the extent of an entire year's work. This requirement is designed, not only to bridge over the transition from the high school to the college, but also to assure the possession by the student at the end of his first year of some reasonable proficiency in at least one subject. Like the requirement of a three-major and a two-major group in the high school, it represents the effort to emphasize continuity as a principle of prime educational importance—a principle much more significant, in our judgment, than is the pursuit of any particular subject-matter merely as such.

It is further provided that the student shall during the first two years of the college work pursue at least two courses in English composition and at least one course in public speaking. These requirements have been made by the University for many years, and experience appears to justify their retention.

It is not necessary to enlarge further on the so-called "distributive group requirement," in accordance with which a student is obliged to offer at least four courses in each of the four main departments of knowledge to which reference has been made.

It only remains to add that the requirement in modern language other than English is now put upon a basis somewhat different from that which it has ever before enjoyed in the University. A student may at any time during the first two years discharge this obligation by reporting himself to the examiner in the proper department; in case he shows satisfactory ability to read the language selected he will be relieved of all further requirement in the study of modern languages. We speak of this examination as an "efficiency test," and it is believed that not a few students will avail themselves of the opportunity to meet the requirement in this way, rather than by pursuing the four full courses which will otherwise be required in order to satisfy the modern-language departments of the candidate's ability successfully to read a modern language other than his own.

It will be understood that the "distributive group requirement" and the modern-language requirement may easily be met in the high school by a student who so chooses. For example,

history and a modern language pursued each to the extent of two units would meet the demands, although the University would itself test the attainments in the modern language either by an examination or by the student's ability to pursue a course more advanced than those taken in school.

The final two years of the college course are designed to give the student the very best opportunity which the University affords to achieve two ends: in the first place, to specialize in one or two lines of work with reference to the intensive cultivation of his intellectual tastes and the beginning of his professional training, should he be looking toward professional work of any kind; and, in the second place, to afford opportunity for a wide range of elective work enabling him to come in contact with realms of knowledge previously closed to him. To meet the first end it is provided that every student upon graduation must present at least nine coherent and progressive courses in some one subject and at least six in another. The remainder of his time is entirely his own to pursue such subjects as he may desire, it being understood that no student receives a bachelor's degree without completing four full years of college work at a certain standard grade of excellence, which, be it said, is above the grade necessary merely to pass a course. A student who has distributed his time in school and college most judiciously will find it possible to have about one-third of all his work elective, the remaining two-thirds being provided for under one or other of the requirements already laid down.

Students who are planning to enter upon work in law, or medicine, or education, or theology, are enabled under this plan to give the equivalent of their entire final undergraduate year to such work, to this extent shortening the period of their strictly professional training. Candidates for the degree of doctor of philosophy in any of the academical subjects are also enabled to begin their intensive specialization during the latter part of the college course. It is particularly hoped that the vocational interests of women may under this program be more intelligently and effectively worked out than has heretofore been the case. It should be understood, however, that the term "vo-

cation" is used here with a wider and more flexible meaning than generally attaches to it in connection with so-called vocational schools.

The details of this part of the plan do not lend themselves to ready presentation in a paper of this character, and the writer frankly foregoes any effort to describe the situation further. It may be said by way of illustration, however, that in the case of the A.B. degree the sequences of nine and six majors respectively are confined to Latin and Greek, and that the sequences in this case reach back to an earlier point than is true with the curricula for the S.B. degree, for example. The general principle, however, is one and the same.

Broadly speaking, therefore, the plan as a whole contemplates the introduction of a much larger flexibility into the high-school requirements than has previously existed, but with a rigid insistence upon a full fifteen units of entrance work. It contemplates emphasis upon concentrated and continuous work rather than upon specified subjects. In the college stage the early part of the course is devoted to completing the training begun in the school, in order that the student may have at the end of his second year those tools which the University regards as most indispensable for the successful and advantageous use of his final two years of work. The final years themselves are to be devoted to the beginning of intensive specialization, which may, to be sure, reach back into the earlier years of the college course, but which will certainly find its main significance in the closing period. It is thus hoped to make these years of maximal efficiency in preparation for the larger and later interests of life, and to insure that every student who goes out from the University shall have a considerable mastery of a solid and substantial kind over some one field of knowledge.